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Uprising

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1. The following document is a report on the risings in
Germany, including detailed information on troop movements of the Soviet
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The document

reads as follows:

THE JUNE REVOLT IN EAST BERLIN AND THE
SOVIET OCCUPIED ZONE OF GERMANY

I. Preliminary

1. Political Situation in East Berlin and the Soviet Zone in Germany (SBZD) at the beginning of June 1953.
2. Introduction of the New Course.
3. Reaction of the Population.
4. Political Tendencies in East Berlin and the SBZD before the June Revolt.

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25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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I. Preliminary

1. Political Situation in East Berlin and the SBZD at the beginning of June 1953:

The radical measures for the Bolshevization of the Soviet Zone (which were intended to lead eventually to the liquidation of independent agriculture, private business, and the bourgeoisie), the processes of justice by terror, the struggle against the churches, together with the growing lack of means of sustenance, had already led, in the weeks preceding the June uprising, to a universal feeling of dissatisfaction among the broadest levels of the population. The high figures for refugees are eloquent testimonials to the fact. Particularly after Pavel Judin had been named political adviser to the Soviet Control Commission, as successor to Vladimir S. Semenov (then transferred to the Foreign Ministry in Moscow) in April of the present year, did Walter Ulbricht commence to carry this Bolshevization policy

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to a degree of severity not hitherto experienced in the Soviet Zone. So far as labor was concerned, a decision of the Central Committee of the SED, of 14 May 1953, called upon the Ministerial Council to raise the labor norms by ten percent. The resulting degree of the Ministerial Council, 28 May 1953, raising the labor norms, on plea of necessity, while maintaining the previous rates of pay, caused the utmost bitterness. The carrying out of this decree, must then be regarded as the cause of the June outbreak.

2. Introduction of the New Course:

As of 28 May 1953, the Soviet regime announced the dissolution of the Soviet Control Commission, as it had existed in Germany since October 1949. At the same time, it was announced that the Ministerial Council of the USSR had decided to establish the post of High Commissioner with his headquarters in Berlin. To this post was named Semenov, who only a few weeks before had been relieved as Political Adviser of the Control Commission. Pavel Judin was named as Acting High Commissioner.

In naming Semenov High Commissioner, Moscow commenced an alteration of its political course in the Sowjetische Besetzte Zone Deutschlands (SBZD), whose effects were specifically shown in the following statements and the following measures:

- a) In a decision of 9 June 1953, the Politburo branded the measures taken by the party and the regime during the last few months (which looked to a compulsory Bolshevization of the Soviet Zone) as a "serious error." It demanded the repeal of the most recent decrees issued during the course of the intensified class struggle, in order "to improve the living condition of the population and to strengthen legal security in the DDR."
- b) On 10 June 1953 there was a statement by the representatives of the government of the Soviet Zone, with Prime Minister Grotewohl at their head, during the course of a conversation with Bishop Dibelius and five bishops from the Soviet Zone of the Evangelical Church, that all measures hostile to the church in the Soviet Zone Republic would be adjusted. They declared themselves ready to guarantee the independence of church affairs according to the provisions of the constitution.
- c) At a meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Government of the Soviet Zone on 11 June 1953, the demands of the Politburo of the SED were accepted and a series of measures (passed in the recent period and intended to promote radical and compulsory Bolshevization) were withdrawn.

The agreement with the Evangelical bishops of the Soviet Zone, looking to abandonment of the attack on the churches which had taken place the day before, was expressly confirmed.

At an instruction period for agitators on 11 June 1953 these conclusions were interpreted to mean that the Five Year Plan might not be carried out, since main emphasis was now being placed upon the production of consumer goods. To account for the fact that the socialization of agriculture was

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delayed; comparisons were made with the situation in the Soviet Union in the years 1922 to 1925.

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the Five Year Plan was being ignored in favor of popular welfare, on the basis of the decisions of the Politburo of the SED. The "new course" which Semenov had commenced was put into effect by a series of further measures by the Soviet administration.

- a) The paramilitary GST-training (GST = Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik) was stopped at once. On 17 June 1953 it was arranged that, when resumed, this training was to proceed only in accord with certain special measures. The decision not to continue the GST-training, in the form hitherto used, was announced in instructions for agitators on 8 and 11 June 1953. It was further stated that the relaxation of tension now appearing in the realm of higher politics must not be disturbed by any false steps of a militant-political nature. This decision was emphasized in the report of a discussion at the district headquarters of the GST on 12 June 1953.
- b) All work in the construction project at Ruegen harbor was stopped on 11 June 1953, on orders of the Ministerial Council of the Soviet Zone. The continuation of security work at the projects under construction was to be closed down until 31 August 1953. Only a temporary halt in the work seemed to be involved, however.

3. Reactions of the populace:

The strong unrest and discontent of the population, and especially the attitude of the workers toward the existing regime and the measures of the administration of the Soviet Zone, in the weeks preceding 16 and 17 June 1953, had already led to strikes, though these were limited, both in time and in areas affected. Strikes of this nature had already taken place in the following large industries of the Soviet Zone.

Improvement pit (Fortschrittschacht) of the Mansfelder Kupferbergbaugebiets on 14 April 1953

Kunstfaserfabrik Prennitz (artificial silk works) on 28 April 1953

VEB-Werkzeugmaschinenfabrik Berlin, Krautstrasse, and the Marzahn branch, on 6 May 1953

FEMAG Finsterwalde, on 27 May 1953

VEB-Gasolan, Fürstenwalde on 27 May 1953

Kjellberg, electromechanical factory, Finsterwalde, on 28 May 1953

Winding shop of the Railroad Repair Works, Treptow, on 29 May 1953

LEW Daimler, Henningsdorf, about the end of May 1953

Nagema Refrigeration Works, Chemnitz, on 3 June 1953

Armor Plate Works of the SAG Krautheim, Chemnitz, on 3 June 1953.

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After a reduction in pay on grounds of "failure to fulfill percentages of the new norms determined by the Ministerial Council on 28 May 1953 there was a strike at the Eisenhütten-Kombinat Fürstenberg/Oder on 6 June 1953. The workers demanded: "The old norms, the old pay."

Demands similar to those in Fürstenberg, between 6 to 16 June 1953, led to strikes in at least eight big factories (among others, LEW Daimler, Henningsdorf, Kunstfaserfabrik Premnitz, VEB Werkzeugmaschinen Berlin, VEB Gaselan Fürstenwalde, as named above.)

The decisions of the Politburo of the SED and the administrative orders, based on them, for "improvement of living conditions" at first met with a favorable reception in wide circles of the population, especially among laborers. This was shown, for example, in the obviously improved mood of the people after the release of amnestied prisoners in Neuruppin on 12 and 13 June 1953. The restraint of the VoPo still further pleased the delighted masses, while the Soviet troops took no notice of what was going on. For political exploitation of the decisions of the Politburo of the SED of 9 June 1953 and the administrative orders of 11 June 1953, the usual resolutions were passed by officials throughout the Soviet Zone: "The workers thank the party and the governments" (for their discernment and broadmindedness, as shown in the new arrangements.)

4. Political Tendencies in East Berlin and the Zone before the June Rising:

The new course of Soviet policy in the Zone, introduced simultaneously with the appointment of Semenov as Soviet High Commissioner in Germany, had one primary goal in foreign policy, and must be regarded as part of Moscow's new peace offensive. It was an effort to destroy the Western conception of a political, economic and (above all) military unification of the Republic, in a system directed by the US and with anti-Soviet emphasis. It sought to do this through an internal German rapprochement under the cloak of the (fictitious) unification of Potsdam. Moscow's German policy appealed, explicitly, to the Potsdam Agreement. The decisions of the Political Bureau of the SED and the government order of 11 June 1953, in which the change of course was made definite, unquestionably followed as a result of Semenov's directions. Semenov wanted to get rid of the obstacles to an understanding with the West, which obstacles were, in his opinion, obvious enough. This is definitely stated in the decision of the Political Bureau: "The great purpose of establishing German unity demands, from both sides, measures which will make it really easier for both parts of Germany to draw together."

The ostensible change of mood, so demonstratively displayed to the West, could, as a result of this, neither be regarded as abandonment of the previous intention of Bolshevization, nor as a "purely propagandistic" variant in the cold war. Quite otherwise, it represented an effort to proceed further with the same old operating goals, but with new tactical means. That these measures were, unfortunately, merely of a tactical nature, was shown in a press conference in the Soviet Zone on 16 June 1953. This had not yet been influenced by the disturbances in East Berlin. At this conference it was stated: "The great political purposes are not influenced by the "go slow" methods and the amnesty that followed." It is possible to speak of a genuine, constructive alteration of policy in the Zone which contrasts with the flat program of Bolshevization that had been followed by Judin and Ulbricht up to the time of

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Semenov's return, insofar as the duality of the Soviet policy is again made definite. If, in the end, no reunification and neutralization of Germany takes place, then Judin and Ulbricht are still there, to set up again the Bolshevization of the Soviet Zone formerly practiced.

In its foreign political aspects, the "Semenov course" does not especially look forward toward a direct preparation for Big Four negotiations, but far more toward a common movement of all Germans. The reunification and neutralization of Germany is no doubt being prepared, in some way or other. This, no doubt, has as its purpose an effort to prejudice the existing situation in a special way, in case of later negotiations among the Big Four and at the same time practically constitutes an undermining of American plans.

So far as its internal political aspects are concerned, correction of the previous program of Bolshevization is beginning. This particularly weighs down the economic and psychological situation. The struggle with the churches, the increasing bitterness of the agrarian sector, the one-sided favoritism of heavy industry, to the injury of production of consumers' goods, and coordinate therewith the care of the civilian sector, the forced elimination of individual businesses, various measures in the cultural field, and, finally, the unpaid increase in workers' norms had awakened the forces of resistance. These not only seriously injured the functioning of economic and political apparatus, but, in addition to that, made any further turns of the screw of Bolshevization seem unprofitable. The propagandistic structure, whereby the correction of Ulbricht's policy was carried out, was built on the thesis that this was not a departure from any line, in view of the "mistakes" of the SED regime, but the fault of SED officials who had moved too fast for the popular mood. This was to be made good by a "back-orientation to the people's attitude."

Various local strikes had broken out some time before the events of 17 June 1953, indicating clearly enough the rift between the people and the terror regime. Even at that time, they had caused the Soviets some concern. These strikes may, perhaps, have hastened the abandonment of the various compulsory measures intended to bring about the radical and compulsory Bolshevization of the Soviet Zone Republic. Certainly, however, they were not the occasion for this change of direction by the Soviet Zone Communist Party and by the regime itself.

II. Origin of the Revolt

1. Events up to and including 15 June 1953 in East Berlin:

At Building Site, Block 40, Stalin-alley/North, in East Berlin, which is supposed to have been the starting point of the disturbance, there had been vigorous discussion of the raising of norms and reduction in pay on 5 or 6 June 1953. This was much the same sort of thing that had taken place in other undertakings in the Zone, which had already sometimes led to local strikes (See Section I, Para. 3 above.) It fell to the lot of individual SED and FDGB officials to quiet the abusive workmen. The officials were aware that Block 40 was regarded as the "best party organization of the SED" in Berlin.

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When the new decisions of the Politburo and the governmental measures of 11 June 1953 were discussed at the building site, the workers reacted in the same way as the appointed officials: If such "privileges" were permitted, there could not fail to be more like them to come.

While the workers were still hoping for new norms, there followed the next pay day on 12 and 13 June 1953. These were--in the face of all their expectations--based on the new norms.

Over the weekend of 13 and 14 June 1953, the workers of Building Site Block 40, Stalin-Allee/North had a chance to think over, with their families, what their future living conditions were going to be. Without exception, they all agreed that they could not make out on the newly established wage scale.

On Monday, 15 June 1953, there was a meeting of the crew at Block 40.

It was decided, under the leadership of an SED official, to pass a resolution of thanks for the decision of the Political Bureau and the government, on 11 June 1953, to Minister-President Otto Grotewohl and SED General Secretary Walter Ulbricht.

When some members of the group proposed to include, in the address of thanks, a request for the reintroduction of the old norms--as being, so to speak, a logical expansion of the program "to make a decided improvement in the living conditions of the people"--the majority agreed with the proposal. Special importance was attached to a cautious, indeed a courteous, formulation of the request. The word "demand," (forderung), which some embittered individuals desired, instead of the word "request" (bitte), was not used in the resolution.

With regard to this resolution of Block 40, the Central of the FDGB of the IG Bau-Holz, cautiously agreed with the chairman of the Betriebsgewerkschaftsleitung (BGL) to lay the petition before Grotewohl and Ulbricht, with a view to their possible agreement.

The IG Bau-Holz was aware that the dispatch of the resolution might be expected. At an early hour on 16 June 1953, before work began, a representative of IG Bau-Holz appeared in Stalin-allee, to hear what the building workers had to say about the norm question and to answer them.

Meantime, word of the resolution passed in Block 40 had gotten around to the other building sites in Stalin-allee/North. They were generally ridiculed by certain hostile individuals. In Block 40 itself, however, voices were raised suggesting it was a mistake to wait and to leave matters to the IG Bau-Holz. Again a meeting of the crew of workers was called. Two workers were chosen as delegates to hand the resolution to Grotewohl and Ulbricht.

Again the BGL/Nord endeavored to await the result of the mediation by the emissary of the IG Bau-Holz. Then, for the first time, the workers of Block 40 quit work--at 2:30 p.m. on 15 June 1953. They declared that they would not go back to work before a fully-empowered representative of the IG Bau-Holz had intervened and a pacifying settlement of the norm question had been achieved.

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In the course of the next few hours, word that Block 40 had quit work spread like wildfire. Numerous workers of the North Section, and later of the South Section, declared their solidarity with the proceedings of Block 40.

2. The Close of 16 June 1953 in East Berlin:

In the morning of 16 June 1953, the workers were waiting at the building sites of the sections Stalin-allee/North and Stalin-allee/South for the empowered negotiators of the IG Bau-Holz. Instead, there appeared, at one building site of Section South, a representative of the BGL, with an article by FDGB Secretary Otto Lehmann, in the "Tribune" of 16 June 1953. In this article, Lehmann maintained that the workers had hitherto done too little work and had been paid too much money. It created a terrific uproar. Word of the article passed about to all the building sites.

At 8:30 a.m. (work should begin at 7:00 a.m.) the expected representative of the IG Bau-Holz at length appeared. He was greeted with intense outcry and the whole group of workers, about three hundred in all, began to ask about Lehmann's article. The IG Bau-Holz representative declared that they would have to go by the old SED solution: "First more work, then better pay." Then there really was a tumult!

After much excitement, it was finally decided to send to Grotewohl and Ulbricht the two delegates who had been chosen on 15 June 1953. About 10 a.m., another idea began to spread: Everybody ought to go. Why should the others sit here? Strike here and now!

Thereupon, about 10 a.m. on 16 June 1953, three hundred building workers from Sections North and South, in their working clothes, moved out into the streets. By 10:30 a.m. they had picked up about two hundred other workmen from neighboring building sites. It is not true that, when the procession began on 16 June, 1953, there were already 1,000, 1,500, or even 3,000 building workers taking part.

At the start no demonstration procession was formed. The crowd just poured ahead in a confused way, but, as it got into street traffic, it soon took on some kind of march order. The workers carried a single (improvised) transparency, with the inscription: "We building workers demand Elimination of Norms." Nothing was heard at the start about free elections, resignation of the regime, and so on.

Unhindered, the workmen marched across Alexanderplatz, Unter den Linden, Friedrichstrasse, Leipzigerstrasse, to the square before the main entrance of the "Haus der Ministerien." By the time they reached this square, about fifteen hundred people were shouting loud protests against the increase of norms and the price policy.

When the two delegates of Block 40 asked, at the entrance of the building, to see Grotewohl and Ulbricht, the crowd poured after them. When neither Grotewohl nor Ulbricht appeared, a chorus of voices began to intone a political slogan for the first time: "Down with the Government."

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At the protesting calls of the constantly growing throng, the Minister of Plans and Deputy Minister President, Heinrich Rau, together with the Minister of Mines and Forges, Fritz Selbmann, appeared at a window of the government building. The crowd still yelled for Grotewohl and Ulbricht.

As the outcry went on, a table was carried down the entrance steps and placed in front of the crowd. Selbmann appeared and spoke. He was constantly interrupted. When he cried: "I am myself a worker," the crowd replied: "You forgot how long ago." When he addressed them as "Dear colleagues," he got the answer: "You're no colleague of ours. You're a rogue and a traitor."

Then a workman jumped up on the podium beside Selbmann and said (verbatim): "What you (Selbmann) tell us doesn't interest us anyhow. We want to be free. Our demonstration is not against the norms only. We're not from Stalin-allee only, but from all over Berlin. What you have here is a popular rising. We demand free and secret elections." Preserving his anonymity, the man vanished in the crowd, once more.

When Selbmann tried to reply, he was again interrupted by an intoned chorus of: "We want to be free," and "We demand free elections."

Another speaker from the ranks of the workers called: "Colleagues, our demands certainly aren't being fulfilled. We must carry our strike further. Tomorrow, we'll call a general strike."

About 2:30 p.m. a loudspeaker truck appeared and began announcing: "The Ministry has given up the raise in norms. Workers are requested (gebeten) to leave the House of the Ministries." By 3:00 p.m. most of the demonstrators had left the square before the ministries, though some groups engaged in vehement discussion remained behind.

Between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m., about ten thousand people assembled on Rosenthaler Platz. Around 7 p.m., it became known that Ulbricht and Grotewohl would speak on the day's events at a "special active party assembly" in the Friedrichstadt Palace. This statement contradicts other information, especially press reports, according to which the meeting in the Friedrichstadt Palace on 16 June 1953 took place at an earlier hour. According to certain accounts, the discussions in the Friedrichstadt Palace had already begun during the morning of 16 June 1953.

Thousands started for the Friedrichstadt Palace. When they got there, they ran into counter demonstrators, who carried a transparency saying: "Long live the Government!" They came to blows.

Grotewohl and Ulbricht declared in their speeches, among other things, that they had never thought of avoiding serious discussion with the people. Grotewohl went further and declared that the Central Committee of the SED would make a sweeping investigation of all mistakes, stop all measures, and then reach its decisions. Until 11 p.m. further small demonstrations kept arriving. There were fights between demonstrators and SED-activists. Everywhere among the demonstrators, the word went round: "General strike tomorrow. Assemble around 6:30 a.m. on Straussberger Platz."

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3. The Question of the Regime:

In a subsequent investigation it seems unimportant whether the little march of protest, with which the outbreaks began, was officially inspired; whether the existing irritation over the raising of norms was deliberately employed by the government; or whether the intention to strike, doubtless known in advance, was merely tolerated. There is no doubt that there was genuine rebellion, after eight years of suppression. The demonstration, at the beginning indulgently treated, swelled by small additions like an avalanche, until it slipped out of the hands of the authorities of the Soviet Zone.

- a) One workman from Stalin-allee gives the raising of the norms as the reason for the strike. He does, nevertheless, believe that eighty building workers planted a strike for 16 June 1953, but were pinned down by the VoPo and hindered in their demonstration. This contradicts the facts given under Nos. 1 and 2 above, which rest on the testimony of eye-witnesses. One man is said to have gotten away, alarmed other building sites, and thereby stirred up the demonstration. (It is possible that this story accounts for a variation in a newspaper story. According to this report, seventy--not eighty--workers were to handle the affair on behalf of the Soviet Zone regime, but one of them betrayed the plan and thereby unloosed the mass demonstration.)
- b) A young workman from the Stalin-allee ascribes the disturbance entirely to the raising of the norms, which enhanced already existing resentment against Ulbricht, caused by past friction with the Walter Ulbricht Brigade.

- c) [redacted] the disturbances were not provoked by the Soviet German regime, but originated in exasperation over the raising of the norms. This woman thinks that there was no effort to prevent the affair at the start, because the authorities wanted to show the world that free expression of opinion was possible in the DDR. The VoPo not only did not interfere, as she herself observed, but even guided the procession.

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The idea of tolerating demonstrations of small groups so as to show a corresponding new policy would explain the light hand. It would also explain the attitude of the VoPo, which was at first so tolerant--doubtless on orders. This holding back of the VoPo had already been observed during the trouble in Neuruppin (see Section I, Para. 3). There were also many reports and press publications across the boundaries and between zones. These circumstances may be one reason for the swift spread of the revolt on 16 June 1953.

- d) [redacted] on 16 June 1953, the VoPo had been forbidden to fire. This prohibition was not lifted until the arrival of Soviet troops on 17 June 1953.

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It can be regarded as certain that both the Political Bureau and the government knew that the building workers would present a resolution to Grotewohl and Ulbricht. It is possible, indeed probable, that the decision for a general outbreak--not a mere sending of delegates--came from the ranks of the workers themselves. It is beyond question that a demonstrative form of criticism, in

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limited and controlled degree, was expected and permitted by the Soviet Zone administration. This, moreover, was undoubtedly at the desire of the Soviet High Commission, which as the whole course of events since 11 June 1953 shows, was inclined to a demonstrative criticism of the previous course of the government and the SED, which was to be reoriented on the "people's opinion."

III. Further Developments and outbreak of the Revolt

1. The Close of 17 June 1953 in East Berlin:

About 7 a.m. there was a big gathering in the Stalin-alley. The general word went round: Matters will go further today. No work. We go back to Leipzigerstrasse.

Around 7:45 a.m. a procession marched as a demonstration from Straussberger Platz across the Alexanderplatz and into Leipzigerstrasse. Many curious people joined it. The marchers intoned in chorus: "Down with the SED," and "We demand free elections."

At approximately 8 a.m. an emergency state of alarm for the VoPo was ordered over the Soviet German police radio. Emergency groups of the VoPo and entrucked units of the Soviet Army were to be seen in the streets.

About 8:10 a.m., when the head of the procession reached a VoPo chain, barring their passage in Leipzigerstrasse, the first disarming of the VoPo took place. A crowd swung back and went to Potsdamer Platz. There large masses of people occupied the western side.

About 8:30 a.m., another demonstrating group tried to force their way into the government building.

About 9:15 a.m., several demonstration parades came together on the Potsdamer Platz.

About 9:30 a.m., a great mass of people assailed the government building anew. Klosks were overturned.

About 10:00 a.m., individual posts and patrols received orders over the Soviet German police radio to fall back on stronger forces.

About 10:15 a.m., the VoPo guard in the Columbushaus was disarmed.

About 10:20 a.m., there was uproar followed by fierce encounters before the government building.

From 10 a.m. on, there was a discussion of the situation in the Central Committee of the SED in Karl Liebknecht House. All the editors and radio people that could be reached were called together. Hermann Axen gave them directions to handle the matter on the following general lines:

"The enemy agents in West Berlin are trying, with the help of Fascist provocateurs, to destroy the developing understanding of the German people. Behind

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them stand the Americans who would like at the same time to torpedo the developing understanding of the Soviet Union with the other great powers. The imperialist agencies in West Berlin are responsible for all the results."

Axen further explained that the Soviet Union would intervene with the Western powers and, along with its "nests of agents," roll up the whole problem of West Berlin. The instruction period lasted till 11 a.m.

About 10:40 a.m., six or eight Soviet T-34 tanks and six or eight armored reconnaissance cars and trucks, with Soviet troops, arrived in front of the government building.

About 11:15 a.m., the red flag on the Brandenberger Tor was torn down by demonstrators.

About 11:30 a.m., there were mass demonstrations (15,000 to 20,000 people) in the Lustgarten.

About 12 noon, Soviet tanks were in Unter den Linden and in Leipzigerstrasse. Half-grown boys pelted the Soviet tanks in front of the government building with stones.

About 1 p.m., martial law was proclaimed. The streets were cleared of demonstrators by Soviet tanks. The VoPo undertook a cleanup, which led to shooting. The first wounds were mostly shots in the leg or the calf or the arm, together with grazing shots. However, by evening of 17 June 1953, there were sixteen dead and more than a hundred wounded, according to announcements in East Berlin.

About 3 p.m., persons belonging to the families of members of the government and of the Central Committee of the SED were being taken in Soviet trucks to Macklenberg (Ostseebad Kuehlungsborn).

About 4 p.m., Central Committee officials, under protection of Soviet tanks, were being taken from the Karl-Liebknecht House.

2. Spread of the Revolt in the Zone:

[redacted] news of the beginning of the disturbances in East Berlin had already reached all cities in the Soviet Zone on 16 June 1953. On one side they were quickly spread everywhere by RIAS and other Western Zone radio stations, on the other side by railroad men, chauffeurs, and travelers. In many cities, the news from East Berlin led to immediate preparations for strikes and demonstrations, on 17 June 1953.

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In the Leuna-Werke, strike commandos decided to go to Berlin and share the demonstrations there. They supposed--as did many other demonstrating groups--that there was a central direction in Berlin guiding the revolt in the whole Zone. The Leuna workers wanted to get in touch with this center. On 17 June 1953, however, they were prevented from going farther on their way through the Soviet troops.

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There were telephoned questions in East Berlin, and messages were sent by some individuals. These, however, seem to have been the only moves worth describing as efforts to establish liaison between the revolting masses in the Zone and those in East Berlin--at least so far as is known from information at hand. One report says that three to five thousand workers of the Wismuth-Werke in Aue had, as early as 16 June 1953, gotten hold of 114 trucks, two tanks, and one ambulance, which they expected to use to go to Berlin; but that, on 17 June 1953, they were compelled by Soviet troops to turn back. This report, however, contradicts other reports that have come in.

Without any direct connection with the disturbances in East Berlin, strikes, demonstrations, and risings in the Zone were almost entirely confined to 17 June 1953. In some cities there were encounters quite as serious as those in East Berlin. The demonstrators did not confine themselves to processions and fights with the SED officials and the VoPo, but stormed administration buildings, SED-Centrals, police stations, prisons, and jails. In many places houses and documents were burned. In several cases VoPos and SED members, especially officials of the SSD, were killed.

The countermeasures taken by the Soviet authorities were correspondingly more severe than they had been in East Berlin. Also, the number of dead and wounded exceeded, relatively speaking, the sacrifice in Berlin.

The majority of reports received indicate that the revolt of 17 June 1953 and 18 June 1953 and--in its local dispersion, on following days--came very close to including the entire Zone. Altogether, thus far, strikes, demonstrations, and revolts can be counted in nearly seventy cities and industrial centers of the Zone. Especially hot spots in the revolt are to be found on 17 and 18 June 1953 in the vicinities of Halle, Merseburg, Leuna, Bitterfeld, Leipzig, and Magdeburg. Reports of revolt in the uranium mining districts are contradictory. From Brandenburg/Havel, Coswig, Erfurt, Finsterwalde, Gera, Goerlitz, Jena, Quedlinburg, Rathenow, Dessau-Rosslau, and Rostock-Warnemuende, serious disturbances with bloody conflicts were reported.

a) Halle: Beginning of the strike in the morning of 17 June 1953 in the coach, wagon, and machine works of Halle.

One report indicates that about 15,000 workers of the Buna-Werke and about 35,000 workers of the Leuna-Werke were involved.

Local courts and jails were stormed, forty political prisoners were freed. In the course of the disturbance one VoPo officer was killed and three VoPos were wounded. The district offices of the SED were raided and the VoPo guard disarmed. After the Soviet troops and KVP took a hand, there was heavy street fighting. The number of the dead was estimated on 17 June 1953 at 26 and the seriously wounded at 60. Considerably higher totals may be presumed after the clashes of 18 June 1953.

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- b) Merseburg-Leuna: During the clashes of 17 June 1953 between the Leuna workers and the VoPo, two of the latter were lynched by the workers. Before the key points of the Leuna-Werke were occupied by Soviet troops, incendiary fires were kindled in certain shops. The spread of some fires caused serious damage. The Leuna workers marched to Merseburg and took part in the demonstration there. One Soviet officer, who had fired at a woman, was killed by the workers. Local headquarters of the SED and FDJ in Merseburg were demolished. There was heavy fighting between VoPos and demonstrators, who went after the police with iron bars. About 240 VoPos took off their uniforms and threw away their weapons. There were some dead and wounded among the workers.
- c) Bitterfeld: Demonstrators besieged the Rathaus and assailed police on their beats. The burgomaster and SED officials were locked up in rooms in the cellar. The jail was attacked by workers, who freed 24 prisoners. VoPos and SED officials were put into the cells. After the Soviet troops intervened, there was a great wave of arrests.
- d) Leipzig: The demonstration began on 17 June 1953 with the silent march of five thousand workers. The total number of demonstrators, during the day, in the inner city is estimated at 80,000. There was a raid on the police headquarters in connection with street railway fares. Official headquarters were seized, documents burned. The "Pavilion of the National Front" was destroyed and burned by demonstrators. The main railway station was seized by rebels and the police guards overcome. Railway police uniforms burned. Chief Burgomaster Ulich was recognized by the demonstrators and knocked down. There were mass demonstrations at the People's Battle Monument. Eyewitnesses estimate the number as 25,000 to 30,000 participants. The offices of the FDJ district manager (Ritterstrasse) were seized. SED offices were both seized and burned. At 11 a.m. on 17 June 1953, martial law (Ausnahmestand) was declared. There was intervention by the VoPo and Soviet troops, strong forces of the latter first appearing in the afternoon. In the first conflicts between Soviet troops and demonstrators, there were seven dead, 120 wounded. At the cremation of Leipzig's dead, 68 urns were counted. It is not certain whether the death list in Leipzig is fully represented, even so. On 18 June 1953 there was a wave of arrests. Three workers were shot as a matter of summary justice.
- e) Magdeburg: The start of the demonstrations of 17 June 1953 was at the Thaelmann-Werke (formerly Krupp). The Rathaus, the law courts (Justizpalast), the trade union house, the SED-haus and the FDJ-Heim were seized and occupied by the rebels. The VoPo guard in the main railway station was disarmed and one Black Maria was smashed. The Magdeburg-Neustadt jail was stormed and 361 political prisoners were freed. An attack on the Magdeburg-Sudenburg house of correction was stopped by VoPo fire. Twelve workers were killed in this fight alone. Police headquarters were stormed. After the attack on police headquarters, Soviet troops dragged demonstrators to the railway embankment and shot them with antitank guns. From 4 p.m., there was intervention by the Soviet troops, who handled the rebels with unusual severity. There were seven death sentences (two passed on juveniles, four on workers of the Thaelmann-Werke). These were passed by a Soviet court martial, and heavy prison sentences were also passed. The eventual total of dead in Magdeburg: 138.

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f) Uranium mining districts (Wismuth-Bereich, Aue-Schwarzenberg, Johann-georgenstadt, Annaberg): Reports on actual events here during the day of revolt are so contradictory, that thus far it has not been possible to get a clear picture of what really happened. On the one hand, it is asserted:

aa) In the uranium ore areas there were no strikes and no disturbances. Three Volkspolizei men entered with every shift. All pits were occupied by Soviet guard commandos. During the martial law of 17 to 27 June 1953, there were Volkspolizei commandos in all railway stations. Trains were escorted by two to six Volkspolizei men clear to the end of the line. There was a strict pass and permit control.

On the other hand it is stated:

bb) About 80,000 workers, on 17 June 1953, demanded suspension of the uranium ore mining. SED buildings were demolished, likewise the town halls in Aue, Schwarzenberg, Johanngeorgenstadt, Marienberg, Eibenstock, Auerbach, and Falkenstein. In the conflicts between VoPos and workers, about 560 VoPos were disarmed and compelled to take part in the demonstrations. In Aue and Annaberg, Soviet troops, supported by tanks, opposed the demonstrators, who to some extent barricaded themselves. In spite of early occupation of the mine shafts by Soviet troops with their side arms ready (as, for example, in the mines at Wismuth AG, Johannestadt, where there were 300 men), several mining installations seem to have been destroyed. Up to 17 June 1953, it is established that there were 25 dead and 300 wounded in the entire area.

The following other cities are mentioned as the scenes of heavy conflicts (information abbreviated):

a) Brandenburg/Havel: Assault of the demonstrators on 17 June 1953 on the detention prison; FDGB house burned.

Fire set to the Gr. Kreutz station, which was partly burned.

SED offices and lower court assaulted and occupied, several judges and public prosecutors knocked down. Several SED officials killed by rioters. Efforts made to start large forest fires.

b) Coswig bei Wittenberg: Efforts by rioters, on 17 June 1953, to seize the Coswig jail failed. Several deaths among the workmen.

c) Erfurt: In heavy battles between demonstrating workmen and VoPo, by the evening of 17 June 1953, 14 dead and 130 severely wounded. VoPo assault commandos were disarmed. Soviet tanks attacked demonstrators. Wave of arrests, numerous proceedings against young people are reported.

d) Finsterwalde: Assault of about 2,000 demonstrators on 17 June 1953 against the district offices. Documents burned. VoPos disarmed and knocked down.

e) Gera: Start of the demonstrations on 17 June 1953 was at the EMW-Werke (formerly BMW-Werke). The jail seized by rioters and numerous prisoners set free. Efforts to storm the prison failed. Several VoPos disarmed, a few VoPo trucks destroyed. Intervention of Soviet tanks followed, after 2 p.m.

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- f) Goerlitz: Prison seized by demonstrators. Prisoners freed. Burgomaster thrown out of his office.
- g) Jena: The building of the SSD was demolished by rioters and attacked by the crowd. Political prisoners were freed, documents burned.
- h) Quedlinburg: Demonstrations began as early as 6 a.m. on 17 June 1953. SSD building in Breitscheidstrasse seized, documents destroyed. District police station occupied. Police commandos disarmed and locked in the cellars. House of the DFB (Demokratischer Frauenbund) and the House of Freedom taken. One Soviet officer and two Soviet soldiers disarmed by the crowd and thrown out of the windows. All three probably killed. Severe Soviet measures of retaliation and numerous arrests.
- i) Rathenow: Starting point of demonstrations on 17 June 1953 was the Optical Works. The SED offices were occupied by rioters, documents burned. SSD official Hagedorn killed by the mob.
- j) Rosslau: Assault on the prison by demonstrators. One hundred eighty prisoners freed.
- k) Rostock-Warnemünde: Revolt of the workmen in Rostock in the Diesel-motor Works (VEB) in Rostock on 17 June 1953. Numerous machines rendered useless, fire in several workshops. Damage to equipment about 500,000 DM, according to estimate. Resumption of production will not be possible for three to four weeks. VoPo assault units stoned. The optical works later occupied by Soviet troops. Occupation of the Warnow shipyards at Warnemünde and the Neptun shipyards at Rostock by Soviet troops on 17 June 1953. In attack by Soviet troops on demonstrators at the beginning, two dead. In the Warnow shipyards, on 18 June 1953, 150 arrests. The dead in Rostock and Warnemünde together estimated at forty. More than 250 wounded was definitely established.

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It should be especially noted--in addition to the courage of the workmen, who attacked without weapons--that these rioters, in many cities, tried to get the key points into their possession. The demonstrators correctly judged these key points to be the townhalls, the SED centrals, the police stations, the SSD buildings, and--in some cases--important commercial centers. In Magdeburg the Reich railroad management was temporarily held. In Gera, Goerlitz, and Stralsund, similar attempts were made. In several cities, in the early afternoon of 17 June 1953, the city administration, SED command posts, and police stations were cleaned out. These successes resulted in nothing. Soviet troops on 17 June 1953 crushed all centers of resistance and gave their establishments back to the displaced authorities. the efforts of the rioters in the various cities were not coordinated and the idea of a central direction is out of the question.

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3. Echoes of the Uprising:

The proclamation of martial law, the intervention of Soviet troops with many tanks, summary shootings, and severe measures of surveillance enabled the Soviet Occupation authorities to smash the rising of the workers in East Berlin and the Zone. In spite of martial law, isolated strikes and demonstrations continued in East Berlin and the Zone on 18 June 1953. They still continued in individual places of the Zone on 19 and 20 June 1953. In the Mansfeld copper mine, they were still continuing on 22 June 1953. The authorities of the Soviet Zone and the various party headquarters were restored to their functions by the Soviet Occupation. In East Berlin and the Zone, mass arrests were already under way on 18 June 1953, as a result of the revolt.

The sector boundary in East Berlin was hermetically sealed on 17 June 1953. The first measure of relaxation was the opening of three crossing points. On 23 June 1953 it was made possible to cross at a limited number of points, with special passes. On 23 June 1953, the street railway service, which had been halted during the unrest, resumed operation within the Soviet sector. On 1 July 1953, the sector boundaries were again completely open.

Martial law was countermanded in most cases on 25 and 26 June 1953, in cities of the Zone, except for a few cities where the disturbance had been especially serious. In East Berlin, the Soviet commandant of the East Sector lifted martial law for the first time at 12 midnight on 11 July 1953.

IV. Soviet Occupation Troops During the Revolt

1. Employment of Soviet Troops in East Berlin.

- a) Approach of Soviet forces: The demonstrations in Berlin on 16 June 1953 apparently caused the Soviet command in the Zone, in the late evening of 16 June 1953 (provisionally, and in case of further disturbances on Berlin East Sector) to start the 1st Mechanized Division's first units (then stationed in Döberitz) on their march by way of Potsdam into the area south of East Berlin. The march started about midnight of 16/17 June 1953. Some units of this division (which apparently came from the Döberitz training area) were located on their way through Schönefeld (with 25 tanks) around 5:15 a.m. on 17 June 1953. Later, around 1:00 p.m. they were located at Potsdamer Platz, on the sector boundary and also in the inner part of East Berlin. The main part of the division got its start from 4 a.m. on and during the morning of 17 June 1953. By this time every unit was apparently in full marching order and had pushed off.

When the big demonstrations began in the morning of 17 June 1953, it at once became apparent that the strength of the 1st Mechanized Division, even when supported by a simultaneous attack by the KVP and general police, would not suffice to occupy the entire East Sector of Berlin and at the same time ensure blocking of the sector boundaries. As a result, the 12th Guard Armored Division from Neuruppin was at once started for Berlin. Most of the division, presumably without heavy tanks, moved out of the base around 1 p.m. on 17 June 1953, preceded by 200 tanks and started on its march of 80 kilometers. The column included 60 trucks with ammunition from Wulkow. In East Berlin, the commitment of the division, whose advance had apparently not reached the inner city before 8:00 p.m., was first definitely established on 18 June 1953, in the Gesundbrunnen area.

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The same considerations that caused the 12th Guard Armored Division to be called out, are probably responsible for alerting the 14th Guard Mechanized Division in Jüterbog in the morning of 17 June 1953 and starting it for Berlin. It was observed marching along the Zossen-Lichtenrade road, with more than a hundred tanks, between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Motor vehicles of the division entered Berlin for the first time on 24 June 1953, being observed at the Ostkreuz station.

- b) Commitment in East Berlin: The units of the 1st Mechanized Division and the 12th Guard Armored Division, upon their entrance into the city, were assigned to close the sector boundaries, together with KVP units and general police. They were also assigned to clean up the street processions. Further units of both divisions were also apparently assigned to occupation of large factories, stations and bridges. The divisional boundary was probably the River Spree, beginning at Humboldt harbor. As early as 19 June 1953, in most sections of the sector boundary, the Soviet tank and other units were relieved of their guard duties by KVP and general police. They were then withdrawn 200 or 33 meters behind the sector boundaries, for security. Only in the area Gesundbrunnen-Bernauer station did tanks of the 12 Guard Armored Division remain in the front line. Around 24/25 June 1953, the KVP units in the sector boundary were replaced with ordinary police. Simultaneously, the divisions brought more and more of their units, in isolated posts in the city, together. Thus, positions altered almost daily. Apparently this was meant to let the people see, with their own eyes, the strength of the Soviet troops in various places. The 14th Guard Mechanized Division was, from 21 June 1953 on, stationed, in great strength, as a reserve on the Wuhlheide. Except for the three divisions named, no other units seem to have been brought into the Berlin area.
- c) Withdrawal from East Berlin: As normal conditions returned in Berlin, the 14th Guard Mechanized Division, with most of its vehicle units, was withdrawn from the Wuhlheide in the night of 27/28 June 1953, and marched toward Sweden. The tank section of the division was transported from the Stalin-allee station, Aldershof, and Schoenweide on 27 and 28 June 1953, with destination: Jüterbog. Early in July, the 1st Mechanized Division assembled its units, which had hitherto been scattered in isolated groups throughout the city, and likewise brought them together in the Wuhlheide. About the turn of the month, the 12th Guard Tank Division also began to pull units out of the inner city and assemble them in the area Buch (West)--Berlin (North). Other units, including strong tank units, remained in the city. The further relief of the 12th Guard Armored Division, which had been planned for the week ending 4 July 1953, seems to have been postponed around the early part of July, so that units remained in the Buch area and in the inner city. These measures may have been caused by the stiffening attitude of the people, who were determined on another strike, unless the promises of better living conditions and of restitution--as promised by the men captured on 17 June 1953--were carried out. Only on 11 July 1953 did the armored units of the two last named divisions begin to move away from the Buch and Schoenweide stations, toward Neuruppin and Döberitz respectively. In the night of 12 July 1953, units of the 1st Mechanized Division withdrew by way of Schoenefeld. From about 15 July 1953, units of the 1st Mechanized Division and the 12th Guard Armored Division were being withdrawn from the East Berlin area. Openly for the relief of these forces, units of the 7th Guard Mechanized Division from Fürstenwalde and the 6th Guard Mechanized Division from Freienwalde were drawn toward East Berlin.

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2. Commitment of Soviet troops in the Zone: The commitment of Soviet troops in the Zone served in some cases to combat the disturbances. In other cases, however, in numerous cities, it served merely as a precautionary measure, to forestall demonstrations. Martial law (Ausnahmestand) was declared by the Soviet authorities in most cities as early as 17 June 1953; but, in some cities, it was delayed until 18 June 1953. In general, it ended after eight or ten days, except in areas where the revolt was bitterest.

When the disturbances broke out, most of the Soviet forces were in summer camps on maneuver grounds, while their home stations were nearly empty of troops. The recall of contingents of troops from their maneuver grounds into the various cities and industrial centers, on 17 and 18 June 1953, was carried out almost entirely over the roads. Only from the Templin maneuver ground were tank units carried by rail in the night of 18 June 1953. Units of the 8th Guard Mechanized Division marched over the 120 kilometer stretch from the Konigsberg maneuver ground to its entrance into Leipzig--with both wheeled and half-track units. These measures, which contrast with all previously observed Soviet usage, may perhaps be related to the question of time. It may also be due to uncertainty as to how far the railway men were involved in the uprising. So far as present information goes, however, only the railway men of Reichsbahnamt 5 (Wustermark), entered the strike of 17 and 18 June 1953. Regular movement of transportation was, in general, first observed again from 20 June 1953.

As a measure against the demonstrations and also as a protection to public buildings, various depot commands in the home stations were brought into action until the Soviet units, moving from the maneuver grounds, could arrive. Troop movements to individual cities went on till about 20 June 1953 and continued in a scattering way till 22 June 1953. From about 25 June 1953, mostly after the lifting of martial law, the troops began to move back to the maneuver grounds. The following information is available regarding the entrance of Soviet troops into Halle, Leipzig, and Magdeburg, as particularly fiery points in the uprising:

- a) Halle area: At 8 p.m. on 17 June 1953, strikes began in the big factories in Halle as well as in the Buna-Werke in Schkopau and in the Leuna-Werke at Merseburg. This strike involved 220,000 men. About 50 tanks were brought into the city. At evening, they were reinforced by motorcycle troops and AT units. Martial law was declared at about 8 p.m. During the night of 18 June 1953, 50 Josef Stalin Tanks arrived from the direction of Dessau-Justerbog. By 18 June 1953, a general strike was under way and in the morning hours of 19 June 1953 there were also some strikes. The first withdrawals of troops began actually on 19 June 1953. In Naumburg, three transport trains with 50 tanks arrived from the maneuver ground at Lossa. Units of the 21st Guard Mechanized Division were definitely noted, moving in the direction of Berlin. These were certainly detained in Halle. On 23 June 1953, a troop transport was unloaded in Halle. It ostensibly came from Justerbog. On 29 June 1953, martial law had still not been lifted. Identification of the troop units brought in was impossible. However, it is believed that, at first, units of the Second Guard Mechanized Army (repeat: Army), perhaps the 7th Guard Armored Division, came in. Later, they were relieved by units of the 21st Guard Mechanized Division, normally stationed here.
- b) Leipzig: At 11 a.m. on 17 June 1953, martial law was declared in the city. The first troops brought in to control the spreading unrest were the Tank Training Battalion of the 8th Guard Mechanized Division, from Heideblick Barracks. About 7 a.m. on 18 June 1953, a force of about a thousand men reached the Schoenau Barracks, coming from the direction of Wurzen. Between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., 50 tanks arrived, presumably from the 1st Guard Armored

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Regiment of the 8th Guard Mechanized Division. Around 5 p.m., another twenty tanks arrived, presumably from the 20th Guard Mechanized Regiment of the 8th Guard Mechanized Division. In the course of the afternoon of 18 June 1953, other strong tank and AA units, coming in on the Autobahn from the direction of Halle, are reported to have reached the Heiterblick Barracks. At this time there were 1,500 men in the Schoenau Barracks, while outside the barracks there were still stronger units with 60 tanks of the 64th Guard Heavy Armored Regiment (64. Gd. schw. Pz. St. Gesch. Regts.) of the 8th Mechanized Guard Division. Part of this regiment, with 24 tanks, was observed on 17 June 1953, on the march from Grimma to Leipzig. On 22 June 1953, the Kommandantura was given six more tanks. It is unquestionably established that from early on 18 June 1953, strong units of the 8th Guard Mechanized Division entered the city.

In addition to the divisions permanently brought in, the two armored regiments of the division from Borna and Leisnig were added as reinforcement, as well as units, mostly tank units, of the 20th Guard Mechanized Regiment of the division from Grimma. Troop units that marched in, supposedly from the direction of Halle, could not be identified. They may possibly have belonged to the 7th Guard Armored Division. The strong units of the 8th Guard Mechanized Armored Division, brought in along the road from Koenigsbrück, were alerted (probably in the course of the afternoon of 17 June 1953) and moved out during the evening hours of the same day.

- c) Magdeburg: Within the city, extensive strikes and unrest in all industries began in the morning hours of 17 June 1953. The fact that, as early as 16 June 1953, police were already called away to Berlin, favored the demonstrations. Though the information is somewhat contradictory, the first Soviet tank troops seem to have been brought against the demonstrators sometime between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Definite information from within the city itself, combined with messages from Haldensleben, describe the march of tank units from the southern part of Letzlinger Heide toward Magdeburg. These indicate that strong units of the 19th Guard Mechanized Division, as well as army troops of the Third Assault Army (Stoßarmee) were used to quell the disturbances. On 20 June 1953, scattered strikes were still going on. The mass of the troops were, however, pulled out of the city and lay in a ring around it, in the immediate vicinity, in a position of readiness. On 22 June 1953, peace reigned in the city. In addition to the 19th Guard Mechanized Division, units of a pioneer regiment from the Aken area were brought in.

3. Comprehensive Conclusions Regarding the Commitment of Soviet Army Forces in East Berlin and the Zone:

The alerted troops turned out with steel helmets, gasmasks, and pack with blanket. The appearance in the march columns of numerous ammunition wagons from ammunition dumps indicates that (in addition to the two-thirds ammunition supply kept with the weapons) the one-third supply kept in battalion and regimental dumps (Regimentstrossen) was also taken along. Fuel was continuously supplied by the garrisons. On the approach march, the main roads were cleared by wedge-shaped advance tank formations, followed by motorized infantry. These troops forced the population off into the side roads. Important groups of buildings and crossroads were at once secured by tanks, together with 76 mm

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field guns and 57 mm AT guns, brought up to the position. In the vicinity of all Soviet billets, additional AA defenses with 12.7 mm machine guns were built. The barred ventilation spaces of the tanks were in part covered with shelter halves. This device was probably meant as protection against incendiary weapons and burning debris. The troops sent into Berlin had field dressing stations with new tents of German manufacture. 25X1

From observations in the Potsdam area, it seems that the moment the troops were alerted, Soviet families were gathered together in the barracks, sometimes in great haste. In general the Soviet troops as a whole made the impression of a disciplined and well-trained force. Of the twenty-two fighterplane units in the Zone, nineteen could be identified as participating, with larger or smaller units, during the period of disturbance. Some units, however, did nothing beyond patrol duty in their own areas. (Compare Section 2.)

4. State of Alert of the Soviet Air Force During the Revolt:

During 16 June 1953, normal training flight activities were carried out on all fields. On 17 June 1953, however, a high state of alert was apparently ordered for fighter-plane regiments. The fighter-plane regiment which, in the beginning of June 1953 was ordered from Döberitz to Brandenburg-Briest, was sent back to Döberitz on 17 June 1953. The crews were kept beside their planes and ten bombs were lying ready beside each plane. Airfield boundaries were closely guarded. The fighter-plane regiment on the Brandis Airfield kept all planes standing ready, each with two men and all ready to start from the field. Here, too, special security measures were taken on the field, several tanks were brought up, AA guns ready. Other air units were still carrying out their usual duties on 17 June 1953. On 18 June 1953, all air traffic stopped. All air units in the Zone were in a state of high alert. Crews were kept by their planes. The planes themselves stood side by side on the fields and were in some cases enclosed in partitions, proof against shell or bomb fragments. Trucks and tank trucks stood under camouflage nets, while airfield security measures were tightened. Even on 19 June 1953, most of the air units, as already reported, remained in a state of alert. Only a few flights could be noted, and these for transport or reconnaissance. On 20 June 1953, the alert for air units was lifted, and normal air activity was begun again. The fighter-plane regiment that had been sent to Döberitz on 17 June 1953 was sent back to Brandenburg-Briest on 22 June 1953.

V. The Volkspolizei during the Revolt in East Berlin and the Zone

1. Effect of the "New Course" on the KVP:

The change in course by the Soviet Zone administration in the first half of June 1953 (See Section I, Para. 2) also affected the Volkspolizei in various ways:

- a) Limitation of the buildings of the KVP.
- b) Breaking off of the military training of 18 to 30 year old members of the SED and FDJ, already being carried out by the KVP.

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- c) Extensive retrenchments by discontinuances in the KVP.
- d) The cadre divisions ("Verbände") Oranienburg, Brandenburg-Hohenstücken, and perhaps also Potsdam, which were directly under the Ministry of the Interior, were changed into Constabularies ("Bereitschaften") and their assigned regiments into "Commandos." That is to say, these units again bear the same designations as they did before their reconstruction began in the Spring of 1952. Whether any real changes in organization went with this change of names, whether there was a mere exchange, whether purely police units were involved, remains to be seen. Rumors of the contemplated dismissal of 40,000 to 60,000 men from the KVP remain unconfirmed.

2. Commitment and restraint of the KVP during the Revolt:

The KVP were for the most part kept in garrison areas during the revolt. In the Berlin area, reinforcing units were brought in from the territory of Army Group North and from Saxony. A large part of the KVP units and schools were only kept in a state of alert and were never committed at all. Individual units have been identified as follows:

- a) The Bereitschaft (Kader-Div.) Oranienburg was alerted at 5:30 a.m. on 17 June 1953. It was brought in motor vehicles to Berlin and there committed at Alexanderplatz and later, after being divided, to Treptow.
- b) The KVP troop training area at Weisswasser was evacuated by KVP units from 16 to 20 June 1953. They had been called back to their garrisons. On 25 June 1953, the Nochten Camp was again occupied by 800 KVP men.
- c) Five companies of the Pasewalk RVP were ordered to Berlin on 17 June 1953. The companies returned to Pasewalk on 29/30 June 1953.
- d) The KVP Division, "Prora," was alerted on 19 June 1953, but was not committed.
- e) The Leipzig KVP forces had to be called back from the Weisswasser training center and got to Leipzig for the first time on 18 June 1953. The KVP remained at Leipzig till 25 June 1953, though the Soviet troops assigned to security duties at the same time had been relieved on 23 June 1953.
- f) The Baerenstein-Niederschlag unit sent a KVP battalion to Berlin on or about 20 June 1953. This is one of the KVP garrisons at the greatest distance from Berlin.
- g) The artillery barracks of the KVP-Verband Halle, normally occupied by 1,500 men, was guarded by Soviet units on 17 June 1953.
- h) The KVP Verband Rostock, though not immediately committed, was sent to the zone boundary en masse on 25 June 1953.
- i) In the area of Army Group North, certain instruction that had already begun was not broken off during the disturbance.
- j) In Berlin KVP border police appeared from time to time from distant garrisons (ring around Berlin). Other police were also brought in. In

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some cases these forces came from places at a really great distance, such as Goerlitz. There was absolutely no uniformity in the behavior of the KVP units that were used. Information regarding them runs all the way from desertion to reckless firing. The reports that have come in strongly suggest that the KVP could not be relied upon in case of internal trouble, at least not to the degree the Soviet authorities wanted.

3. The Seepolizei during the Revolt:

The Seepolizei were not employed during the disturbances. The flotilla lying at Peenemünde was probably alerted on 18 June 1953 and put to sea at once. Only two rather dubious craft seem to have remained in harbor. Until 25 June 1953, no flotillas returned. Perhaps the flotillas put to sea, because the crews were not regarded as wholly reliable, as a means of preventing desertion or mutiny. In November 1918, unreliable crews managed to get away with individual ships of the German Navy.

VI. Psychological background and results of the June Revolt:

The uprising was the result of the exacerbation of a definitely revolutionary situation in the Zone, created by the forced Sovietization of the zone, without regard to the basic fundamentals of existence of the population. Its coming was presaged by storm warnings (strikes, etc.), but nevertheless came as a surprise both to East and to West.

The main factor was the body of workers of the Soviet Zone, free from bourgeois struggles for security but driven to the limit. Summoned by the West and emerging for the first time from their eight-year submission to a system of organized isolation, they became aware of their revolutionary strength, though occasionally overestimating the real possibilities in a changed mood.

The shift from purely economic to political demands was the signal for a genuine popular rising, which, however, was denied the success it might have achieved for lack of planned preparation and the organization of a psychological leadership. This was much desired and often expected after the West's declarations of solidarity. On one hand, there was disillusion because of the passivity of the West; on the other, there was always the hope of making known the psychological situation through some future change. The blood sacrifice was not in itself so great as the effect of the terroristic measures that followed, which made a spiritual impression in this psychological situation.

The uprising revealed a distinctly hesitant attitude on the part of the bourgeois intelligentsia, who were ready neither to join in nor to make sacrifices. That was the difficulty in the revolutionary potential of the workers.

These events revealed the unreliability of the officials on the lower levels, especially those of the FDJ and Volkspolizei. Their behavior differed from place to place. They varied from refusal of obedience to fanatical use of their weapons. But even now the difference between the behavior of different sections deprives them of value as a combat force.

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The Soviet troops were plainly sent in to put down the rising, only with reluctance. The troops saw a situation directly contradicting the ideas they had been taught. They had to fire on German workers, active laboring proletarians. With memories of the basis and demands of their own much-vaunted revolution they had to fight with the front turned around. With many soldiers the purposeful words about Western provocation must have missed the mark entirely. Their native fatalism, combined with a soldier's deep-rooted obedience received for the first time, before their very eyes, a genuine and violent argument against their own system. It would be a mistake and also an underestimate of the discipline of the Soviet Army to expect immediate future results so far as its future military value is concerned. Judging by past experience, however, the true bearing of these events will be much discussed among the peoples of the Soviet Union. Nor can the uprising fail to have had its effect on the other satellite states.

Against the West, the reproach was often heard that it gave only lip service to its declarations of solidarity. It was held to be its duty, both for the general welfare and in its own interests not to fail to do something. Evaluation of events in press and radio failed to present in a psychologically adroit way the relation of all this to Bolshevik doctrine, to turn the Soviet propaganda diet upside down, to drain away the water from the Communist infiltration, and to make effective demands for the consolidation of Europe. Here, too, there was lack of psychological leadership.

Ref. to. Annex No. 3, affected by the Uprising in the East, ...
shall be. ... Annex No. 3, ... of Soviet Combat Divisions in ...
with the Uprising in East Berlin and the ... 5 pages.

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